

March 8, 1936

THE STATUS OF BISHOP GORAZD

R. F. Lau

1920
Sept. 14

The Czechoslovak Government recognized the new Czechoslovak Church, composed of Czech not Slovak ex-Roman Catholic priests and laymen (not ex-Uniates). Convention of Church professes leaning toward Orthodoxy. Serbian Orthodox Synod appoints Bishop Dositej as "Interpreter of the Orthodox Church and Counsellor in Matters of Organization of the Czechoslovak Church" (this is the title as given by the late Rev. Robert Keating Smith). Dositej may therefore properly be termed Patriarchal Delegate for the Czechoslovak Church.

1921
June

Three celibate priests are elected as bishops: for the chief See City, Prague, the cultured leader Dr. Farski; for Moravia, with See at Olomouc, Father Gorazd, a simple, good parish priest; and a third, Fr. Parik. All three were ex-Roman Catholics, not ex-Uniates.

1921
Sept. 25

A year after formation of new Church Gorazd is consecrated in Belgrade as a Bishop for and in the Czechoslovak Church. Dr. Farski, the undoubted leader in the Church, and Father Parik refrain from seeking episcopal consecration. Laity, losing their parish churches by government's decision, flock back to Roman obedience. Interest of Czechoslovak Church in Orthodoxy diminishes.

1922
Autumn

Bishop Gorazd visits America. At this time he was a duly consecrated bishop in the Czechoslovak Church and in no other, a man whose influence was waning not only in the national Church but in his own See. He attempts to organize seven Slovak

(long ex-Roman, not ex-Uniate) independent parishes in America under his leadership. According to R. K. Smith this group broke up shortly after Gorazd left the United States.

1922
Dec. Gorazd addresses House of Deputies in Portland, Oregon. Requests National Council to appoint commission to keep in touch with Czechoslovak movement here and abroad. Matter referred to Department of Missions. The Rev. R. K. Smith keeps in touch with the seven congregations until his death in Oct. 1931. But, as said above, they did not long maintain an organization.

1923. Gorazd returns to Czechoslovakia. Interest of the Czechoslovak Church in Orthodoxy vanishes. 'Bishop' Farski is practically developing a Western, liturgical Protestantism, with seven sacraments!

Constantinople appoints the Czech SAVVATY as head of a newly formed and duly recognized Orthodox Church of Czechoslovakia and as Archbishop of Prague (ranking next after the Greek Orthodox Archbishop of North and South America).

1923
Mar. 5 Bishop Gorazd advises his Diocesan Council that he intends to
Mar. 12 resign. He publishes his resignation in his official diocesan paper.
Mar. 28 He withdraws his resignation and remains a bishop in the Czechoslovak
Dec. Church. But at the end of 1923 he has only ten priests in his diocese.

1924 Czechoslovak Church meets to elect an official head.

Spring The (unconsecrated) Bishop Farski is elected Patriarch of the Czechoslovak Church, by 95 out of the 102 congregations still remaining in the Church. If Bishop Gorazd received the balance of the votes he could claim seven.

1924
July 21

Gorazd withdraws from the Czechoslovak Church for which he had been consecrated and in which he had held jurisdiction.

July 23
and 24

Two days later Dr. Torok arrives in New York and calls on Dr. Burgess. Receives from him a personal, not an official letter, to be shown to Bishop Weller and Dr. Morehouse only. Dr. Torok has apparently been elected bishop for the Hungaro-Russian (Not Czechoslovak, as is asserted) Orthodox Diocese of Pittsburgh. (This diocese claimed by late Metropolitan Platon as a part of his jurisdiction).

1924
Aug. 10

The representatives of Gorazd's few parishes resolve to join the Orthodox Church of Czechoslovakia, under Archbishop Savvaty of Prague. They sign a declaration that they have left the Czechoslovak Church and desire to be accepted by the Orthodox Church. The priests ordained by Gorazd are received as laymen and reordained by Archbishop Savvaty.

1924
Oct. 19

John Torok is consecrated in Vienna, Austria, by the Serbian Bishop Dositej and by the Czech Gorazd, formerly bishop in the Czechoslovak Church, now a bishop in no Church. He was at no time a member of the Serbian Synod of Bishops, as has been maintained.

1924

The Sobor (Conference) of the Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church meets in Karlowitz. Bishop Gorazd, although in the city, is not invited to the conference. The Sobor adopts a resolution that Gorazd be advised to submit to Archbishop Savvaty of Prague, head of the Orthodox Church of Czechoslovakia.

1925
Jan.

Dr. Torok negotiates with Serbian Synod (so Gorazd writes to Dr. Burgess). The Serbian Synod refuses to recognize him (so states the Secretary of Archbishop Savvaty in his book "The Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia", Prague, 1926). Torok asks Archbishop Savvaty for recognition but is turned down (according to the Archbishop's Secretary, Dr. Vladimir Gruzin in above book).

1925
Jan. 28-30

A letter by Bishop Gorazd, addressed to Dr. Burgess, similar to another addressed to our Presiding Bishop, states that he (Gorazd) has separated himself from Dr. Farski and that he has begun "to work independently". He is unaware whether a single one of the seven Slovak parishes in America recognizes his leadership or will accept the guidance of "Johann Torok" as his representative. He hopes that the Rev. Robert Keating Smith will, with Dr. Torok, investigate the seven parishes. But Dr. Smith (as the Bishop of Eau Claire knows) had rightly or wrongly no use for Dr. Torok and knew that these parishes had no use for Dr. Torok. No investigation of these parishes was necessary. How does all this square with Bishop Wilson's statement (in ^{unpublished} ~~published~~ replies to Dr. Crosby's questions, see Churchman, Jan. 1, 1936) that Torok was elected by "the Missionary Diocese of Pittsburgh of the Czechoslovak Church in America, at the request of Bishop Gorazd"? That the "Czech-Slovak National Church at that time was made up of former Uniats in communion with Orthodox Church of Serbia" Bishop Wilson adds, "It was then an independent National Church". The Czechoslovak Church certainly was; but Bishop Gorazd was then out of it!

1925
Dec. 22

The Czechoslovak Government sanctions the formation of a new Church, the Czech Greek Orthodox Church. In this new Church Gorazd is accepted as Bishop. It covers only a very small part of Czechoslovakia.

1926
April 10

The Serbian Orthodox Church receives this new Church as a Missionary District, under its immediate supervision. Gorazd becomes subject to the Serbian Church. The Bishop of Eau Claire has stated that Gorazd is a member of the Serbian House of Bishops. He is not and he was not.

On the other hand, Archbishop Savvaty of Prague was in 1923, as he was in 1924 when Dr. Torok was consecrated, and as he is today, head of the Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia.

1930

1931-1933 Dr. Torok seeks recognition in some form by the Episcopal Church. Monopolizes the time of the Counselor on Ecclesiastical Relations, Dr. Emhardt. Presents various schemes.

1934
Sept. 29

On the eve of our General Convention held in Atlantic City there appears in the Living Church of September 29 an article which professes to give the background of Dr. Torok's consecration. Earlier articles by the same author prove that he was ill-informed. In this one he introduces to the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies about to assemble in Atlantic City "this brilliant Bishop Gorazd" as "Sovereign Bishop of the Autocephalous Czechoslovak National Church." These are weighty words. They are applied to Gorazd as ~~consecrated~~ consecrator of Dr. Torok. They never were true of Bishop Gorazd; least of all, however, on October 19, 1934 when in Austria he consecrated Dr. Torok.

1936
Jan. 1

In the Churchman for January 1, 1936, the Rev. John R. Crosby asks: "To what branch or branches of the Orthodox Church did the consecrating prelates, Bishop Gorazd and Dositej, belong." Bishop Wilson's unpublished reply states that Gorazd was sovereign Bishop of the Czechoslovak National Church, and that the Czechoslovak National Church was an independent National Church made up of former Uniates. We are referred by the Bishop of Eau Claire to the Journal of General Convention of 1922 for an explanation concerning the Czechoslovak National Church. The implication certainly is that Gorazd was still a Bishop in that Church in October 1924. He certainly was not. See paragraph opposite 1924, July 21.

NOTE: Dr. Gierowski has the book on which this statement is based.

March 19, 1936

Addendum:

At end of article, "The Status of Bishop Gorazd,"
add:

It is true that the Little Entente decided, in January 1924, that the Orthodox Church in Czechoslovakia was to be autocephalous and under Serbian direction. However, this was a political, not an ecclesiastical, plan. Archbishop Savvaty, under Constantinople, has since 1923 been recognized by the Czechoslovak Government as head of the Orthodox Church in that country. The plan was never carried out. Bishop Gorazd has, since early in 1926, been a Missionary Bishop of Olomouc, Czechoslovakia, under the direction of the Serbian Church. He is not entitled to a seat or a vote in the Serbian Synod.

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